

Grants and Awards Task and Finish Group

Date: 14th October 2019

Title: Grant Schemes

Purpose of the Report: To consider whether to make any changes to the existing Grant schemes for 2020-21 onwards.

Contact Officer: Sarah Sandiford, Head of Democratic and Central Services

Corporate Objective	To ensure value for money, operational efficiency and a structure which will underpin current and future service delivery by the Town Council	
Implications:		
Financial		To consider any recommendations in terms of budget for 2020-21
Human Resources	X	
Operational/Service delivery	X	
Procedural/Legal	X	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

Should members be minded, the proposals are:

- 1.1 To consider whether to recommend to the Grants & Awards Sub-Committee any changes to existing General and Guaranteed Grants budgets and schemes, from 1 April 2020.**

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** Historically, the Town Council has used LGA 1972 s137 to provide community grant funding.
- 2.2** Section 137 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972 is a statutory power which enables councils *‘to incur expenditure for purposes not otherwise authorised.’* It is only used when there is no other specific power available; it is a *‘power of last resort’*.

- 2.3 S.137 expenditure must benefit some or all inhabitants; cannot be granted to an individual and cannot be made retrospectively. Grant guidelines have been based on these restrictions.
- 2.4 S.137 expenditure is restricted to a specific amount per elector within a parish. This amount varies each year in line with the retail index. For 2019-20, this amount is £8.12 per elector. S.137 expenditure must also be specified in financial reporting.
- 2.5 The Town Council now meets eligibility criteria to use the General Power of Competence (GPC). GPC allows councils to do “anything an individual generally may do”, although it does not override any specific legislation in place prior to the Localism Act 2011 which prevents parish councils from taking specific actions. For example, GPC does not override the LGA 1894 legislation preventing grant funding to church owned property.

3. CURRENT STATUS

- 3.1 The Town Council operates two distinct grant schemes for the benefit of the local community:
- 3.1.1 General Grants are:
- one per financial year
 - up to a maximum of £500
 - not to be used for general running costs
 - for a specific project to be achieved within a year
 - exclude sport and arts related projects
- 3.1.2 Guaranteed Grants are:
- for a four-year period
 - may be used to support running costs
- 3.2 In both cases, grant recipients must demonstrate the benefit to residents within the parish of Leighton-Linslade.
- 3.3 All sports and arts related grant requests are delegated to the Leighton-Linslade Sports Council and the Leighton-Linslade Arts Forum to administer. Both organisations receive Guaranteed Grant funding for this purpose.
- 3.4 Guaranteed Grant applications were last invited in 2016 and are now in the final year of the four-year term. Applications for the next four-year term would usually be invited in early 2020, for consideration by the Grants and Awards Sub-Committee on 11 May 2020.
- 3.5 General Grants are usually awarded twice a year. First round applications are invited for early in the financial year (April/May). Usually there is remaining budget and second round applications are invited in October/November.
- 3.6 The current annual budget for General Grants is £10,000.

3.7 The current annual budget for Guaranteed Grants is £26,300. Guaranteed Grants are currently being received by 12 local organisations.

3.8 Outside of both Grant Schemes, the following arrangements are also in place:

3.8.1 Leighton-Linslade Music Centre

A five-year Service Level Agreement between the Town Council, Central Bedfordshire Council (Inspiring Music) and the Leighton-Linslade Music Centre Trust, from 2016-17 until 2020-21. A termly meeting takes place between the three parties. Current year funding is £8,675.

3.8.2 Citizens Advice Leighton-Linslade

A five-year agreement from 2016-17 until 2021-21, increasing by RPI each year. Current year funding is £21,627. CALL provide the Council with an annual report and statement of accounts, plus a report to committee.

4. CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 The Task and Finish Group is asked to consider whether it wishes to make any recommendations for changes to the existing schemes, to take effect from 2020-21. Such changes could for example include:

- Annual budget
- Criteria/eligibility
- Amount of funding available
- Term of guaranteed grants

End.